Decline in production of groundnut

2663. DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a tact that yield of groundnut is declining in major groundnut growing States like Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, what are their problems and what remedial measures are being taken by Government in this regard; and

(c) whether it is a fact that high level of aflcioxin contents in gorundnut extractions has seriously reduced its exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) During the long term period of 1967-68 to 1986-87 the yield of groundnut in the States of Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu has shown a growth rate of 0.36, 0.50, 1.78 and 0.54 per cent per annum respectively. During the recent period, yield of groundnut in these States has been fluctuating because of aberrant weather conditions.

(b) In order to increase the production and productivity of various oilseeds including groundnut, two Centrally Sponsored Schemes—National Oilseeds Development Project (NODP) and Oilseeds Production Thrust Project (OPTP) have been launched. Various facilities and incentives through financial assistance are provided under these projects to promote the cultivation and increase the productivity of groundnut. The Government has also set up a Technology Mission on Oilseeds to accelerate self-reliance in oilseeds/edible oils

(c) Some overseas buyers of groundnut extractions are reluctant to offer suitable prices on the ground that such extractions have high level of aflatoxin. The Central Food Technological Research Institute at Mysore has offered technology for controlling aflatoxin levels.

2664. *(Transferred to the 7th December.* 1988)

Setting up of a sponge iron plant in Orissa

2665. SHRI BASUDEB MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the State Government of Orissa has put forth a proposal for a Sponge Iron Plant in the State;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the estimated cost of the Project and where tht Project is likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

New variety of Basmati rice

2666. SHRI BASUDEB MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Agriculture Research Institute has undertaken tissue culture experiment to evolve new varieties of Basmati Rice which are known as good quality in India and abroad;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) the quantity of Basmati Rice produced and exported during the last two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HARI KRISHNA SHASTRI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Over 600 soma-clones of the fine grain aromatic variety Basmati-370 have been generated. 11 high yielding lines and six semi-dwarf lines have been selected. In station yield trials, these dwarf lines have given about 20-30 per cent more yield than the control variety Basmati-370.